Pam. Biog.

United Christian Missionary Society

FACTS ABOUT THE LIFE OF DR. A. L. SHELTON.

I. Appointed medical missionary to China in 1903. Later agreed to accompany Dr. Susie Rijnhart to Tibet after the death of her husband and little baby. Arrived at Tachenlieu, West China, 1904, which was then the eastern border of Tibet. Later went to Batang, establishing the mission there in company with J. C. Ogden.

II. Life at Batang.

Performed major operation two days after arrival in Batang, with a barn door as operating table. Made many tours around Batang, making friends for the work and healing the people. One trip was to Chamdo, seventeen days west of Batang, where he made the acquaintance of Galon Lama, next in authority to the Dalai Lama. Through the influence of this man letter was sent to the Dalai Lama, highest authority both political and religious, in Tibet, asking permission to visit Lhasa and do medical work there. After four months reply came from the Dalai Lama granting permission. This was the first time any missionary ever received communication from the Dalai Lama.

Before his first furlough Dr. Zenas Loftis went from Texas to relieve Dr. Shelton. In six weeks time he took Typhus fever and smallpox and Shelton was unable to save him. Shelton buried him in a little cemetery in Batang hard by the trail that leads to Lhasa.

III. His First Furlough.

Shelton visited many conventions, churches and conferences, telling of the work. A woman pledged $30,000 to assist him in his work. Interest was stirred up everywhere he went. While home he purchased material for his new hospital, consisting of operating tables, surgical instruments, bathtubs, sheets of zinc for the roof, etc.

IV. His Return.

Landing in Shanghai with 30 tons of freight, it was shipped a thousand miles up the Yangtze River in Chinese steamer, then several hundred miles still further in Chinese houseboat drawn by coolies pulling at long ropes as they walked along the bank. Then the freight was landed and a caravan of 169 yak and 300 Chinese coolies was organized, transporting the goods 500 miles overland to the city of Batang.

Dr. Shelton was the first man to take a bathtub into Tibet. He was the first man to take an organ there. He introduced alfalfa into Tibet. The well constructed hospital at Batang stands as a monument to his heroic devotion to the great cause.

V. His Capture by the Bandits.

After receiving permission from the Dalai Lama to visit Lhasa, Dr. Shelton decided to send his wife and children to America while he made the trip. In the spring of 1920, while accompanying them on the trip to the coast he was captured by Chinese bandits and held for $50,000 ransom. He was in captivity 71 days. He had with him a New Testament, a copy of "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush" and a copy of "Rhymes of a Red Cross Man".

He made friends with his captors, healed many of the sick and preached the Gospel to them. Before he escaped the leader of the bandits wanted him to stay with them and be their chaplain and offered him $12,000 a year.

The first thing one of his daughters said to him when he returned from captivity, was, "Papa, God does answer prayer, doesn't he?" Dr. Shelton's simple reply was, "Of course he does."

VI. Shelton was a Pioneer.

The same spirit that drove Columbus from the old world to the new; Livingstone into the heart of Africa, drove Shelton to Tibet, the highlands of the world.

He was a man of faith.
He was a man of supreme courage.
He was a man of prayer.
He was a man with a keen sense of humor.
He was a man of industry. He worked early and late at his task.
He was a man of great vision. In his mind he could see the church established in the city of Lhasa and the Kingdom of God throughout the land of Tibet.
He was a dreamer and lived, and loved, and died, that his dream might come true.

VII. Tibet - A Hermit Nation.

Tibet is the hermit nation of the world. Its population is about four millions. Lhasa is the last great capital city of the world which has never seen the face of a Christian missionary.

Batang, on the eastern border, is a city of about seven thousand. Our mission at Batang is the only mission of any church in the whole land. Our little Batang church is the only Protestant church in Tibet. There the communion is laid every Lord's day.

The hospital at Batang is the only hospital in Tibet. Our school at Batang is the only Christian school. Tibet, therefore, is a land of need, a land of opportunity, a challenge, a great unfinished task and those who would be loyal to Shelton must be loyal to the unfinished task in Tibet.

VIII. His Tomb - A Mountain Peak.

Ray Eldred is buried in the heart of Africa, James Ware, F. E. Meigs and Butchart, are buried in China. Garst is buried in Japan. Wharton is buried in India.

When Livingstone died the natives carried his body 900 miles to the coast and he was taken to England and now reposes in Westminster Abbey.

Shelton is buried somewhere out yonder on the highlands of the world with a great mountain peak as his tombstone, that reaches its hoary head toward the sky some eight or ten thousand feet higher than Pike's Peak.

Dr. Shelton's book published before his return to Tibet, is entitled, "Pioneering in Tibet".

I wondered if Miss Crane and Mrs. St. John might not use some of this for the Bulletin.

"The Love of Christ Constraineth Us"

United Christian Missionary Society

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THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

CABLE ADDRESS "GO"

St. Louis, Missouri

CONTINUING THE WORK OF THE
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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BOARD OF MINISTERIAL RELIEF
CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS
FOREIGN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
NATIONAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

March 8, 1922.

Dear Friend:

Last Saturday morning about nine o'clock, we received the following cablegram:

"Robbers killed Shelton near Batang February seventeenth. Notify girls. (Signed) Hardy"

We have no further details regarding the matter. Our last communication from Dr. Shelton and party was written on December 9 from Atuntze, about ten days South of Batang. They expected to reach Batang by Christmas.

Mrs. Shelton has been in Calcutta, India putting some text books and other translations into the Tibetan language, as that is the only place where Tibetan type could be obtained. The two girls referred to in the cablegram are their daughters, Doris and Dorothy, aged fifteen and seventeen. They are living with their grandparents in Pomona, Calif.

Telegrams from many parts of the country are being received, containing various suggestions for a memorial to Dr. Shelton. His heroic life and death must necessarily be a tremendous challenge to every disciple of Christ. We feel and we are sure he would feel that the greatest thing we can do in such a time as this, is to loyally support and equip the great foreign missionary enterprise for which he gave his life. Unless the regular program and work of which he was a part is sustained, he will have died in vain.

He volunteered and dedicated his life for foreign missionary service. He died in the cause of foreign missions. He died on foreign soil. His body now rests out yonder on the roof of the world, because he believed in and tried to carry out the Great Commission.

You may care to hold a memorial service on next Sunday or some Sunday in March, and we are handing you herewith some information about his life.

Shelton is dead, but his soul still lives.

Most sincerely yours,

OFFICERS OF THE
UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

BW/Mc